whether the western portion was vaulted like the other extremity; whether it was ever completed, or whether demolished at a subsequent period. Yet it is certain that if it never was groined, it was so intended when first founded, as appears by the shafts and springers attached to the side walls." It is not mentioned by Mr. Nichols, but it is deserving of remark, that these shafts and springers are different in character from those in the eastern crypt: the supporters of the groins forming the openings for the windows, instead of being, as in the eastern crypt, formed of a cluster of columns, are solid piers of masonry. An aisle is formed in the centre, and on each side are cross divisions, forming four separate vaults: the vaulting and walls of these divisions are brick. The windows are nearly all perfect, though they have been long bricked up. It is observable that each window consists of but two compartments, with trefoil arched heads, while the windows in the eastern crypt have three such compartments: they appear also always to have been of less depth than the latter. Two of the windows at the western extremity have lately been opened under the direction of Mr. Bunning, the City architect, by which means some light is obtained in this part of the crypt, which was formerly quite dark. The third window in the western wall is, perhaps, the most perfect of any of them: though blocked up, it retains all its original features, even to the iron cross-bars.

In one of the divisions on the south side of this crypt is an outlet, evidently leading to an ancient staircase, which from its situation probably had some communication with the porch of the hall. The quantity of timber and other stores which fill this compartment have prevented a minute examination of this curious feature.

The eastern crypt is separated into three aisles of equal width, by two rows of piers and arches; the piers consisting of four small pillars, clustered, having plain but handsome capitals, from which the arches and groins spread over the roof. At each intersection of the groins is a boss: some among them are very large, bearing shields with the arms of Edward the Confessor, those of the City, well-sculptured roses, and other devices. Mr. Nichols says, "It is worthy of remark, that the arms of London represented on the bosses in the side aisles, have the dagger, while all those in the centre aisle are without it." It may be observed, however, that it is probable, that the plain shield is not intended for that of the City, but the well-known shield of St. George, the patron saint of England.

The north and south aisles had formerly mullioned windows, consisting of three compartments each: several of them are still tolerably perfect, though now walled up. At the eastern end is an Early English arched entrance in good preservation. But it is evident there have been other entrances besides this. The opening on the south side which is nearest the division wall, has, beyond all question, been a doorway, and has communicated directly with the street. The staples for the hinges of a door are still existing on each side, and on the exterior of the opening there is discernible the bases and shafts of small columns, which appear to have stood in niches surmounted by canopies, and probably contained some kind of sculptured figures. This agrees with the exterior views of the Hall, presented in several of the old engravings of it.

The corresponding opening on the north side also appears to have been originally a doorway, and to have led into the arched way which at present communicates with the kitchens. This arched way, there seems no doubt, is the "*porch on the south side of the mayor's court*," which Stow (as already mentioned) says was built in the fourth year of King Henry VI. It will be observed on inspecting the spot that it has every appearance of being a porch, having still, under both the outer and the inner arch, staples for hanging doors or gates.

The present existing side-entrance to the crypt is evidently comparatively modern, being formed out of one of the openings for a window.

The height of the crypt from the ground to the crown of the arches is about 13 feet. In the angles of the aisles at the east end are doors leading in the one case to the external tower, and in the other to a small octagonal groined chamber, the purpose of which it is not easy to conjecture.

This interesting crypt having been recently rescued from its undeserved obscurity, and undergone some slight restoration under the judicious direction of Mr. Bunning, has become an object of some attraction, and it is hoped the corporation may be induced at least to preserve it effectually from future misuse and decay.

It is not possible to point out with certainty what were its original uses, but it seems highly probable from the elegance of its construction that it was devoted to useful purpose. It may have been appropriated as a minor hall of assembly for some corporate purposes, or even as a hall of entertainment. J. Brewer.

THE COMMON SENSE OF GOTHIC.

About two years ago I made the assertion (by no means new, though perhaps not so plainly stated before) that all the distinctive features of what we call Gothic architecture,—all the things which constitute it a style, or are not shared by it with any other style,—were wholly consequent on, and inseparable from, one causative feature, the *vaulting*. In other words, I said that a *Gothic* building means nothing more nor less than a truthfully elaborated and decorated *vaulted* building. And by this I implied two things: First, that whenever a vaulted structure puts on the appearance of any other style, not included in what we term Gothic, either the work is barbarous and infantine art, or else the style an affectation and a sham. Secondly, that wherever a building without vaultings assumes any of the peculiarly Gothic features, these are all affectations and shams.

To most persons my original position would appear to involve both the others, but architects have (as Dr. Robison says) different rules and methods of deduction; and so while not denying the fundamental proposition, and at present quite ready to admit the former consequence (while Gothic is the fashion of their stock in trade), find the latter not quite so welcome.

I was accordingly prepared to expect some argument on this point, but met with exactly the same disappointment of which another writer complains. The architects, instead of arguing, met him with, "Mr. A. thinks the Doge's palace a very beautiful building, but *we* think it a very ugly one," and there the matter rests. Just so a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* treated what he was pleased to call my "vaulting fallacy." Mr. Garbett thinks a building without vaulting cannot be real Gothic, but *we* think it can be very good Gothic, and so think proper to warn our readers against this fallacy.

I do not mention this to answer it. That would plainly be uncalled for, even if the writer had not sufficiently contradicted it himself, by admitting that I had *rightly* regarded *universal arcuation* as the essence of the Gothic system, which is all I asked or needed him to grant. For, if this be so,—if the system consist in the constant use and consistent elaboration of one particular mode of covering spaces, such mode must at least be applied to the *largest* spaces, whether carried into all the minor ones or not. Otherwise the mode employed for the smaller coverings is a sham, like the Grecesque columns and entablatures attached to arcuated Roman and Renaissance building,—mimicking a mode of structure not really used in the main and structural parts. But this becomes far more ignoble in the Gothic case than in the others, because in them the general (or pretendedly general) mode of covering is superseded in the largest spaces by a *better* one, but here only by a *cheaper*:—in *them* the substitution is advantageous to convenience, durability, and grandeur; in *this* advantageous to nothing but a pure piece of niggardliness. In *them* the falsehood of detail is a matter only showing artistic incapacity or idleness; but *here* involving also pretence,—mimicry of better things than the builders can afford.

But the *Gentleman's Magazine* position amounts to this: that details constitute a style, and consequently that, *arching* being the essence of this style, arching must be affected in all details, all the smallest openings being covered (or pretending to be covered) in this mode; but that in the case of all inconveniently large spaces, any other cheaper mode may be adopted. Let us take a parallel case. Honest dealing is an essential rule of the Christian religion; therefore it must be observed in all matters of detail; but in affairs on a larger scale, it may be superseded by any more convenient or cheaper substitute.

To return, however, I had said that it would presently be shewn how *all* the distinctive Gothic features (and not buttresses and pinnacles alone) were derived from and made for the stone vaulting; and wholly false and pretentious in any building without vaulting. I certainly expected this to have been proved ere now; but if nobody takes the hint, why then I must do it myself, as soon as I can spare time from matters more intimately affecting the root and core of art. At present I will only observe that I have never seen any other *definition* of Gothic architecture than the above—attempted, even; viz., that it is *the truthful elaboration of vaulted structure*. And I shall be much obliged to any of your readers who can furnish another satisfactory definition of it. Of course, the same definition may be put into different forms, and I believe its correctest form (though less easy to the superficial learner) would be this,—the truthful elaboration of buildings in whose structure, except the outer and concealed roofing (or, in whose whole *visible* structure), the chief aim is to subject the material to simple *compression*, and to no other force. The material, observe, may be anything, but will generally be stone or other brittle matter in small pieces, because in this case alone is the *compressile* the most scientific (and indeed the only true) mode of building, as those sound reasoners Dr. Robison and Mr. Bartholomew observed. But with all lengthy, elastic, or tenacious materials, the compressile principle of construction, adhered to exclusively, would be wasteful and unnatural, and would never suggest itself to any but a monkey builder or architectural mimic.

Hence all timber structures affecting Gothicism (I do not mean mere joinery of furniture, assimilated to the character of the erecting edifice, but carpentry on such a scale, and with such constructive organism, as to deserve the term *architecture*), I say, all timber architecture affecting Gothicism, as at Westminster Hall, exactly parallels those Roman examples of lifeless pseudo-art which have so long deceived the world, but are now (as I am happy to see by your extract from the *North British Review*), beginning to be viewed in their true light; as all works will sooner or later, though the poets of a thousand ages mistake or mis-sing them.

"*Delenda est*" *Roma*. Let the reader take that in any sense he likes as a fundamental principle of all work, and a primary essential to all true art-progress. I will explain it, D. V., elsewhere.

The monuments of ancient Rome, monuments of mental impotence below that of the rudest tribe that carves calabashes; monuments of jobbery and imposture, erected by the most swinish men of a nation singularly full of such men; monuments of incapacity and failure vainly trying to hide itself in borrowed plumes; monuments, every way fit models for the fashions of a "pestilent Renaissance:"—consist, as every architect knows, of bad arch-construction distorted and spoilt, to be squeezed into a mask of sham Greek features still worse. Now just so the timber works of the Westminster Hall class are bad carpentry (generally so bad as not to keep its own shape) falsified and spoilt, to be squeezed into disguises of sham arch-work. The parallel is perfect. They are, to the Gothic architecture, precisely and literally what the (Imperial) Roman works were to the Greek. Westminster Hall is the modern Colisseum; and Crosby and Eltham, &c., &c., are our Circi.

To learn how to use PDF Compression and OCR visit ThePaperlessOffice.org